

Challenges of Neoclassicism

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in Lithuanian literature emerged just after Lithuania had regained its independence. When the most famous historian of Lithuanian literature of the twentieth century Vytautas Kubilius published his seven hundred-page version of history in 1995, the author was accused of conservative attitudes. The critics of Kubilius missed new ways of classifying Lithuanian literature and newer methodological approaches. At the time, few historians of literature supported Kubilius but in time it turned out that his history was basic, as one must accommodate oneself to newer methodological approaches.

Why is this story extraordinary? The key purpose of historiographic research carried out by Kubilius was to update Lithuanian literature, including the European movements in art of the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Kubilius also reviewed the least contentious modernist movements like symbolism (Kubilius 1995: 150–194) and avant-garde which was called “Lithuanian” (ib. 198–236). Yet, Kubilius asked many essential questions about Lithuanian literary history. The nature of those questions had been determined by the geopolitical situation of Lithuania rather than art: until 1904 tsarist Russia did not allow Latin characters in Lithuania, and after World War Two Lithuanian cultural life suffered from new Soviet political repressions and ideological pressure again. The short, active and independent period of Lithuanian literature (from 1918 to 1940) developed under the influence of art movements from Germany, Poland, Scandinavia and Russia, yet clearly perceived its identity as based on nationality, myth and folklore.

The historiography by Kubilius recorded all possible influences, manifestos and programmes, omitting the stages of historical process with no clear manifestos or any signs of a programme. However, intuitively or deliberately those stages reflect certain elements of predominant tendencies. This is how the term *ism* (Kubilius 1995: 23) appeared in that historiography as well as in “Tendentious prose, drama, poetry” (ib. 55) or in the chapter “The literature of national idealism” (ib. 70). And in the second half of the twentieth century Kubilius completely rejected chronological characterization of European art, focussing on the phenomena determined by geopolitical history.

The focal point of these phenomena was the counterpositioning of chapters called *Soviet Literature* (ib. 369) and *Literature of Exodus* (ib. 432), the voluminous chapter *From the "Thaw" to Independence* (ib. 508–605), a slightly reviewed situation of regained independence and dramaturgy, criticism and children's literature. However, there was no universal focus or generalization, like at the initial stage of his historiography. At the time, under the circumstances of isolation, the misrepresentation of European values, the dogmas of socialist realism as well as the endeavours to save identity and texts written in the mysterious Aesopian language were all too prevalent.

After more than two decades since Lithuanian independence, (largely thanks to comparative literature conferences in Tartu) we have learned that there are similar processes taking place in all Central and Eastern Europe. However, even now the search for a universal aesthetic dimension is not at all easy. And though the map of modernist movements that have prevailed in Europe has been well described, Kubilius, while synthesizing Lithuanian material of our first independence period, remained fairly careful. In Lithuanian art he distinguished two bigger movements of neo-romanticism (ib. 240) and realism (ib. 289). Indifferently and in quite a meaningless way, Kubilius defines the poets and writers not belonging to those movements as "moving towards individuality of creation and autonomy" (ib. 325).

One of the most famous Lithuanian modernists, Henrikas Radauskas (1910–1970), as well as Viktoras Katilius (1910–1993), have been included in the list of those individualists. Instead, the neoclassical trend would have much better fitted the literary ideology of Radauskas and Katilius, let alone Vytautas Mačernis (1921–1944). In the historiography mentioned above, the latter belongs to the field called *Resistance Literature* (ib. 402) which in my opinion is absolutely inadequate when applied to Mačernis.

In neoclassical ideology, hidden or expressed more openly, the discourse of Christian history generally has been more clearly perceived in older literatures whose self-reflection has been longer, more consistent and more critical. At least for a century those literatures have been revising themselves in the light of literary scholarship. And it is not because neoclassicism would be an unclear result of change in literary values. It is so rather because in European history neoclassicism has several versions as an authentic movement of art. Often it is a tendency without any name, movement and manifestos, yet it is important from the viewpoint of literary self-reflection. Neoclassicism focuses on the category of time, on the mystery of history and human existence which it contemplates in the light of art, religion and philosophy.

This definition of neoclassicism is possible only when literature has formed a meta-level, a tradition of evaluation, when literature starts to reflect recurrent phenomena in the process of change. Focusing mainly on the achievements of the neo-romantic generation and briefly covering realist poetics of the first independence period, Kubilius remained quite consistent. Against the background of Soviet repressions, the ideology of neo-romanticism and its most prominent poet Justinas Marcinkevičius (1930–2011) also retrieved the national identity of literature and aesthetic values of literature. Undoubtedly that ideology particularly reconnected the Lithuanians of the twentieth century with the archaic epoch of national struggle which is indefinable in categories of time.

Being the last European pagans, serfs and romantics, Lithuanians could hardly leave their archaic identity behind. The nation's quite cruel historical past slowed down the process of meeting the challenges of modernity: by the beginning of the twentieth century a unique secret distribution of Lithuanian characters and secret Lithuanian schools were the only sources of knowledge. At that time the first signs of modernity emerged in Central Europe (Czech, Poland) and Eastern Europe (Latvia).

The romantic worldview which was mastered quite late became predominant in Lithuanian national culture. During the first half of the twentieth century it determined trends in art. There is no doubt that attempts at avant-garde and modern art (for example, futurism, expressionism, impressionism, symbolism) were authentic and successful (for example, Kazys Binkis (1893–1942) who was a remarkable writer). Yet they were not sufficient in order to overcome the romantic worldview and stylistics. Perhaps the most outstanding poets of the first half of the twentieth century were neo-romantics like Salomėja Nėris (1904–1945), Jonas Aistis (1904–1973) and Antanas Miškinis (1905–1983).

In such a monotonous setting more complicated tendencies for a renewal of literary mentality could have been even less visible. I would describe our neoclassicism as exactly corresponding to such a nature. On the one hand, it is due to a deep analysis of culture and a positive relation to memory. In every situation romantic mentality is based on nature, for example it can be the human psyche or nature which determines the rhythm of years and instincts. Memory's revision in romantic and later in avant-garde and decadence art has as its basis either ritual symbolism that should not be criticized or traumatic interruption and norm-free experience which is both an aesthetic and philosophical challenge.

This is especially obvious in avant-garde and decadence art where destructive experience and existential angst become an object of analysis and a means of research. Of course, the difference between discourses of romanticism and classicism is not that simple and schematic. Yet, principles of reading would be linked to basic matrices of relation between humans and the world: romanticism exploits the subjective model of relationship and classicism refers to an objective model. The paradoxical thing is that nature which is so important to all forms of romanticism, is also basic for the classicist conception of the world. And if in romanticism the feeling of time has been linked to the community-created model of time of individual experience, then classicism centres on the objective and critical relation of that spontaneous experience of an individual.

An obvious example is provided by contemporary Polish neoclassical poets, for instance by Czesław Miłosz. Initial to this critical approach is the relationship between natural science and the surrounding environment and accumulative human experience as well. That relation has been intercepted from the epochs of historical classicism and the Enlightenment. The category of time is an essential challenge of classicism, and especially of neoclassicism and natural science. On the one hand, it is so because the questioning of ideas taken over by the cultural tradition is more fundamental, especially as regards the model of Christian time. For example, in his essays Miłosz was constantly looking for possibilities of communication between post-Einstein physics and the poetry of the modern period (Miłosz 2004: 30–31). He regretted that poetry fell behind physics.

On the other hand, the romantic idea of psyche's nature complicates too much the Christian idea of linear time and respectful (positive) relation to Christian values as well as to the problems they determine. In western culture the model of time is undoubtedly linked to the basic discourse of Christianity and its critical reflection. If Lithuanian exodus literature which during Soviet times was written in America, Germany, Canada, Australia and France, proceeded from existentialism that was popular at the time, it was so just in emigration, not in Lithuania.

The Soviet regime which repressed all possibilities of modernity and opposed the newest philosophy, art and "decadent" literature of Western Europe, basically also suppressed authentic self-expression of literature, individualistic trends and thus discredited the sources of European art. In the context of such a repressing system, Lithuanian authors became involved in romanticism again (Kubilius 1994: 285). The romantic worldview led to natural subjectivity and neutral experience of nature corresponding to the agrarian

mentality, thus also allowing a certain variety of philosophy of nature (Jurgutienė 1998: 228).

In Lithuanian literature of the Soviet period neo-romanticism was perceived as a natural position of national struggle rather than a definite trend and recurrence in history (thinking of this could lead to the contemplation of the dynamics of repetitive ideologies, ideas and trends in art). Such a position emerged when new personalities, their attitudes and talents (for example, not just Marcinkevičius, but also Janina Degutytė (1928–1990) and Alfonsas Maldonis (1929–2007) emerged. Neo-romanticism was insistently linked to poet Maironis (Jonas Mačiulis, 1862–1932) who encouraged patriotic feelings, love for the homeland and the aesthetic nature of confessional lyrics.

Many neo-romantics emigrated, for example the poet Jonas Aistis left for America; others like Antanas Miškinis, Kazys Inčiūra (1906–1974), Jonas Graičiūnas (1903–1994) suffered in concentration camps in Siberia. Under the Soviet regime, the nationally acclaimed lyric poet Salomėja Nėris enjoyed popularity, glorification and love. However, after the war she died in quite strange circumstances. Only after the re-establishment of independence and taking into account selected works (*Prie didelio kelio*, published in Lithuania in 1994), written in a prison in Moscow, we can understand the physical and moral torments the poet must have suffered when perceiving her mission as a betrayal of Lithuanian freedom. In 1940, together with other politicians and artists, Salomėja Nėris (Bačinskaitė-Bučienė) travelled to Russia in order to bring “Stalinist sun” to Lithuania.

From the perspective of history of Lithuanian romanticism and neo-romanticism, one should acknowledge that there were at least several waves and recurrences. And just in the context of Marcinkevičius’ generation one can notice a lack of aesthetic diversity in neo-romanticism. Aesthetic decisions as well as the same programme of national ideology became repetitive. That programme was necessary for the nation that sought to save her identity and language. During the last decades of Soviet time the programme of national ideology supported by professional research into language, myth, folklore and experiments of music, theatre and cinema became deeper and more universal.

This discourse has been based on an agrarian worldview, on a cyclic rhythm of nature and work. There is an essential belief in the miracles of life and nature, in the extraordinary power of nature’s revival and symbolism of Mother Earth (Kubilius 1993: 38–39). At the same time it absolutely ignores the line of Christian time which was persistently investigated, for example, by the Poles in their modern literature. For example, the contribution of French or Spanish

literature of the golden age to the Christian consciousness of Europe was a plan of linear time. It seems that Maironis found a code which consisted in the sense of one's earth and the memory of ancestors. It can lead a reader through the same cycle of life-death-revival which has been characteristic of old Lithuanian religion and romantic worldview as well.

Quite a few Lithuanian neo-romantics (the writers of Marcinkevičius' generation and the slightly younger generation as well) followed the way of Maironis. In the 20th century the aesthetic imprint of romanticism based on life's miracle for a long time supported the might of Lithuanian literature, especially in Soviet times. The most important feature was to deny the present in the name of the past and search for one's essential relation to ancestral eternity.

In the long run, such an ideological and aesthetic model lost its relevant motivation. Marcinkevičius' generation represented a particularly late version of Lithuanian romanticism. In that period several alternatives to such a worldview emerged, influenced by newer tendencies of Western literature. Viewing the dogmas of social realism as the sole opponent, the same discourse of romanticism had to generate and develop alternatives in Lithuanian literature. Syllabic-tonic quatrain became *vers libre* and the involuntary semantics of dream was transformed into a voluntary vision.

The main aesthetic renovation still took place above all in emigration. In the late Soviet epoch in Lithuania there was a hidden "silent modernism" (Lubytė 1997: 269). Among its adepts were many talents then officially unacknowledged, for example, the painter Vincas Kisarauskas (1934–1988), the composer Bronius Kutavičius (b. 1932), and others. In poetry silent modernism did not break away from the stem of national ideology. Yet it was influenced by an intellectual search linked to linguistics, structuralism, semiotics, the study of myths and theatre. Silent modernism learned from the new, post-decadence modernity in an absolutely independent, almost amateur way. The examples of this approach are the poet Sigitas Geda (1943–2008), the poet and painter Leonardas Gutauskas (b. 1938), the painter Petras Repšys (b. 1940) and the puppet-play painter and director Vitalijus Mazuras (b. 1934).

Let alone the school of Juozas Miltinis (1907–1980) who has represented the French new wave of theatre in Panevėžys. It has influenced theatre directors Juozas Nekrošius (b. 1935) and Oskaras Koršunovas (b. 1969), bards of modern theatre in Lithuania and Europe.

The comparative approach could help researchers overcome the aspirations of Lithuanian archaic mentality. The romantic worldview is a way to

justify that mentality. Romantic monotony does not explain many deviations of Lithuanian identity in Lithuanian literature of the 20th century. Because of its peripheral geopolitical situation in the Soviet system, Lithuanian literature had no chance to formulate either a dissident attitude (popular in the Russian or Czech cultures) or a strong resistance which was typical of the Poles. Lithuanians tried to withdraw from the Soviet system to their subjective and archaic reality, ignoring existing reality, creating the poetics of paradox and ambiguity in an Aesopian language and switching from the Christian context to the oriental worldview.

Contemporary Polish comparatist Maria Delaperrère claims that there are ideas of humanist culture at the basis of Polish culture. It means that the Renaissance exists in the core of Polish mentality (Delaperrère 2010: 210). According to her, during crisis this core was opposed to destructive tendencies and remained a part of basic values of Western Europe. Humanism has nothing in common with ambiguities, contradictions, fear and hypocrisy, thus proclaiming ideals of pure human nature which were developed by artists and intellectuals of the Renaissance epoch.

Without referring to any other objective argument and appealing to the history of Polish 20th-century literature, Delaperrère claims that classicist tendencies become a balancing point in history. It means that in human history humanism (including all its *neo* and *post*-equivalents) and classicism are absent in times of big crises. Paul Valéry (1916) was probably the first to refer to this and to suggest rethinking the concept of classicism.

According to Valéry, classicist ideology, stylistics and definition are necessary in order to explain historical phenomena and the complicated matters of contemporary art (ib. 221–223). Taking into account the way of how decadent, symbolist and modern art gets recognition, Valéry suggested paying attention to the development of poetics, rather than to some preconceived ideology of art. In his studies on classicism Valéry suggested that turning back to the classicist tradition could be perceived as a universal aspiration to a finished and complete form. According to Valéry, “it is no longer possible to seriously contemplate such concepts as classicism, romanticism, humanism, realism”. Valéry described them as “being valued as bottles’ labels” (ib.).

Delaperrère considers Valéry’s point of view fundamental to the whole context of classicism and classicist manifestations of the 20th century. The most important postulate is that classicism is art which determines things prior to it or following after it rather than determining itself.

In Polish culture this balancing point was defined even several times. In contemporary Polish history it relates to Czesław Miłosz. In the first half of the 20th century Miłosz personified catastrophist ideology, while in the middle of the century he embodied wisdom. Today Miłosz means for us an honest relation to reality. In Polish history of literature Miłosz is valued as a moral authority and his work is appreciated as revealing truth.

In Polish literary history Miłosz was active in two very important ways: in the first half of the twentieth century he mustered modern young poets participating in “*Żagary*” actions, and in the second half of the century he represented humanist values in Central European and Polish literature. In the first half of the century Miłosz linked his catastrophist problematic and stylistics to T. S. Eliot’s work which Miłosz admired and followed (Heydel 2002: 5–17). And in his best period in the second half of the twentieth century, he in a way played the role of a political dissident.

In both cases Miłosz followed the way of European neoclassicism. Even though he avoided any tags which would define his work, after he received the Nobel Prize (1980) he became the epitome of neoclassicism and humanist values in contemporary Polish culture. The fact that in 1967 the first official manifesto (Rymkiewicz 1967: 181) since the beginning of the Soviet time in Poland was written by the poet and literary historian Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz as a neoclassicist is probably not a coincidence in view of Polish history, but surely has more general ideological connotations.

The official Soviet cultural ideology propagated ostensibly classicist art forms which were presented as declamatory. In Soviet Lithuania Vytautas Venclova (father of poet Tomas Venclova) was the most prominent representative of such stylistics. He was a Soviet politician and poet of moderate abilities. His pseudo-classicist work called upon the reader to admire the surrounding world full of undoubted good. Soviet art prohibited the treatment of negative and painful experiences, and it could not accept the aesthetic of ugliness. So the manifesto of classicism in the 1960s was the right way to go.

Another aspect is that there was modernism in the manifesto by Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz. Before the Soviet occupation in Eastern Europe, late avant-garde and modernism had reached the elite of artists and intellectuals (more obviously in Poland than in Lithuania). Those art movements accomplished their mission when presenting one’s subjective inner world of imagination, fantasy and demons. At the beginning of the 20th century the catastrophists’ works (Miłosz was part of it as well) were exactly a phenomenon of that nature.

And just like every phenomenon it needed cultural antinomy and opposites which perhaps would have emerged much earlier, if not in the Soviet time.

For example, at the beginning of the 20th century the Czech historian of literature F. X. Šalda created the concept of neoclassical art (Holý 1998: 740–743). Then avant-garde and modernist art, fascinating cubism and other elements of human fantasy found expression in Czech art. Šalda mentioned spiritual and moral criteria as the basis of neoclassicism and he valued neoclassicism as being universal, beyond time.

With few exceptions, Czech literature did not respond to Šalda's wishes nor to the neoclassical challenge. Still, there are discussions of neoclassicism in Czech literature. Neoclassical tendencies were clearer in Czech prose than in poetry. And so perhaps we should perceive certain underlying differences between mentalities – the Czech disposition to epic structures and to the principle of visual narration. Theatre and cinema narration took over the functions of Czech fiction very early, unlike in Poland, Russia and Lithuania, where till the end of the Soviet time literature was a dominant art form and poetry played an especially important role in literature (Venclova 1991: 318). One is tempted to say that the Czech answer to the neoclassical challenge (which was about reflection of objective reality) was an “escape” to the sphere of fine arts.

The Soviet time “liberated” literature from decadent thinking, sick and subjective experience. In this context Polish neoclassicism had an exceptional mission. One should not forget that the influential researcher of romantic Polish literature Maria Janion acknowledged neoclassicism and called it a postwar phenomenon. As a response, Ryszard Przybicki carried out an ever broader research of Polish humanist tradition to explain Polish self-awareness in its integrity.

In this regard, neoclassicism played a great role in Polish culture – it restored the feeling of history at the time when the Soviets had created a futuristic Utopia which did not need history. Also, through neoclassical approaches the Poles retrieved their Christian identity, for metaphysical worldview needed additional bases for reflection upon history. The Poles also had returned to the ideas of new stylistics formulated by Miłosz in the first half of the century. Unlike the Lithuanians who approached neoclassicism from a neo-romantic perspective, the Poles accepted neoclassicism in the modern context. Both for them and for the Lithuanians one of the most topical subjects inspired by neoclassical ideology was the meeting of physical and metaphysical worlds in word, language and art.

Truth must necessarily have a metaphysical dimension in neoclassical art. Perhaps this dimension (which has also moral implication) was one of the reasons for harassing Russian acmeism. Though Russian acmeism declared its ideas several years after the revolution ("Guild of poets" started in 1911), as we know from Russian literary history, the main exponents of acmeism Nikolaj Gumilyov, Osip Mandelshtam, Anna Akhmatova experienced many repressions, were persecuted or imprisoned. Several of them were killed.

In Soviet art truthfulness was very desirable, for example in socialist realism, and it was not to have any metaphysical dimensions. The socialist regime denied history and its key formants which in Christian mythology related to the subject of the creation of the world and apocalypse.

In this context I would like to formulate a proposition about the model of Lithuanian neoclassicism. This model is also a construct of history of literature. In principle, Lithuanian researchers refer to neoclassical tendencies as belonging to the past. In the first half of the 20th century Lithuanian neoclassical tendencies seemed to resemble those in Poland: the poetry of Henrikas Radauskas and Vytautas Mačernis opposed the neoromantic tradition of Lithuanian lyrics. Yet at that time there were no manifestos or programmes of neoclassicism. They were none in Soviet times nor any after the re-establishment of independence. Lithuanian literature was even more severely persecuted than Polish literature. Catholicism and links to Vatican seemed extremely dangerous to the Soviet regime.

Still, neoclassical tendencies could be constantly observed in literary history. It might seem strange that they are recognizable even in the work of the contemporary elite of Lithuanian poets – Nijolė Miliauskaitė, Kornelijus Platelis (b. 1951) and Donaldas Kajokas (b. 1953). There are Oriental topics in their poetry. What does it mean? Having started to write in Soviet times and perceiving writing as a way of self-perfection, these writers have been looking both for metaphysics and truth about their existence. In my opinion, Christianity originated in Buddhism, Zen and the Vedas. However, the search for truth led them ultimately (and the same could undoubtedly apply to poets) to the same beginnings of European history, to the idea of Christianity and the sources of metaphysical thinking.

Unlike other East Europeans (for example, unlike the Poles who under the Soviets declared the manifesto of neoclassicism or the Czechs who gave up the neoclassical programme), the Lithuanians have not declared any art manifestos since the time of the first independence. Till the end of the Soviet epoch they

remained the nation of poets, while the stand of its lyrics was opposed to the dogmas of Soviet realism.

A critical reflection on romantic perception which emerged during the Soviet decades has been the most important tendency in two generations of poets (those born in the 1930s and the 1950s). On the one hand, Maironis' ideology of nature's revival has been creatively transferred to the new times, and on the other hand, they looked for a new intellectual motivation in order to prevail over its reticence. Since the ideology of Christian time could have been expressed just through symbolic metaphors and images in Soviet art, we could easily notice the signs of that ideology in actually all later works by poets Marcinkevičius, Martinaitis, Geda and Degutytė. Lithuanian poetic prose of that period just confirms this.

However, the ideological questioning of that tendency inevitably emerged. First it was voiced by Czesław Miłosz and, slightly later, by the Lithuanian writer V. Mačernis. Tomas Venclova (he was friend of Miłosz and Josif Brodsky) was the first to consider that question in his first book *Raketos, planetos ir mes* (1962), though allusively. In the book *Kalbos ženklas* (1972) a deliberate neoclassical attitude could be observed, though Venclova never declared any manifestos of neoclassicism.

That attitude has been important as a political stand as well a key argument of historical truth. Actually Venclova treated history in the light of the values of Western Europe, while the Christian aspect of metaphysics appeared in his later work (the selection *Sankirta*, 2005). Also Wiesława Szymborska (though she never declared any religiosity) has always upheld such a conception of history which is necessarily linked to Christian consciousness. And such a conception of time speaks of an undivided mental foundation of Europe.

Lithuanian poets-orientalists of the end of the 20th century aimed right at this common foundation. Since the beginning of the new Lithuanian independence it is possible to fix the line of historical time in the work of S. Geda (his selection *Septynių vasarų giesmės* (1991), while the poets Kornelijus Platelis, Donaldas Kajokas, Nijolė Miliauskaitė, Onė Baliukonytė chose that foundation as a pivot of their contemplation on all subjects, all religious and philosophical questions they analyze in their poetry, such as a moment and eternity, death and revival, time and universe.

In that poetry eastern philosophy and religion have emerged due to several reasons: 1) the questions of nature's cycles and revival which were determined by the lengthy tradition of romanticism; 2) due to the search for an authentic Lithuanian identity in Indo-European religion (the Vedas) and worldview

(among the still existing languages, the Lithuanian language is closest to Sanskrit); 3) due to searches for universal religious and philosophical truths (the parallels of Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, shamanism and Shintoism in Lithuanian literature). Since that generation grew up, matured and started writing already in Soviet Lithuania, without knowing either genuine modernism or avant-garde, decadence or Christian philosophy, such a turn to the East was the sole possibility when breaking away from socialist realism and the compulsory materialist worldview it imposed.

However, honestly and individually following that worldview, before the re-establishment of independence numerous poets born in the 1950s created a varied system of an Aesopian language which enabled them to raise practically all relevant religious and philosophical questions. The idea of history, the irreversible passing of time and metaphysical questions were tackled under the influence of eastern religious systems (Buddhism has been the most popular in Lithuania) and as an individually conceivable problem of eternity, responsibility and suffering. The re-established independence has restored Christianity to the field of intellectual and poetic discussions.

Both in the selection of Miliauskaitė, *Uždraustas įeiti kambarys* (1995) and of Platelis *Prakalbos upei* (1995) Christian metaphysics unfolds especially subtly, not at all directly and primitively. Strongly influenced by orientalism, Lithuanian neoclassicism of the end of the 20th century breaks out from its ancestral past actualized by romanticism and subjectively experienced on the level of personal and collective traumas to encompass a more universal environment of other cultures, worldviews and literatures.

Although surrounded by other cultures and worldviews, Lithuanian neoclassicism has saved the promise of a romantic revival. But in place of nature's world determining the revival, Lithuanian neo-classicists imagine a giant frame of culture which never vanishes and is carried from generation to generation. One should not forget the strange term *sacro-cannibalism* which was created by the Polish neo-classicist Rymkiewicz. The term means that humanity creates its history when consuming culture and constantly picking the fruits of dead cultures, artefacts and texts rather than nature. The idea of *sacro-cannibalism* has a central place in the manifesto of Polish neoclassicism.

And although the manifesto of neoclassicism has not been declared in Lithuania, taking into account the whole process of the 20th century, it is worth analyzing such an authentic and original phenomenon which is not copied or transferred in the history of Lithuanian literature. Since the ideas of neoclassicism restore the programme of Lithuanian culture to the same

European spiritual context where all European cultures matured, I think that it truly makes sense to fix this phenomenon which was specific to the western civilization during different periods and under various names. The ideas of neoclassicism confirm the standards of another (non-romantic) mentality and assimilate Christian perception. They focus on the vicissitude of variable ideas and ideologies in this geopolitical region as well as on the level of objective art, *meta-literature* and on the scale of more universal standards.

In Lithuanian literature the tendencies of neoclassicism which emerged in the Soviet epoch confirm that Lithuanian culture did not belong to the standards of Soviet art. Namely the tendencies of neoclassicism should motivate us to rethink Kubilius' conception of history of contemporary Lithuanian literature.

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